



Violence and Abuse



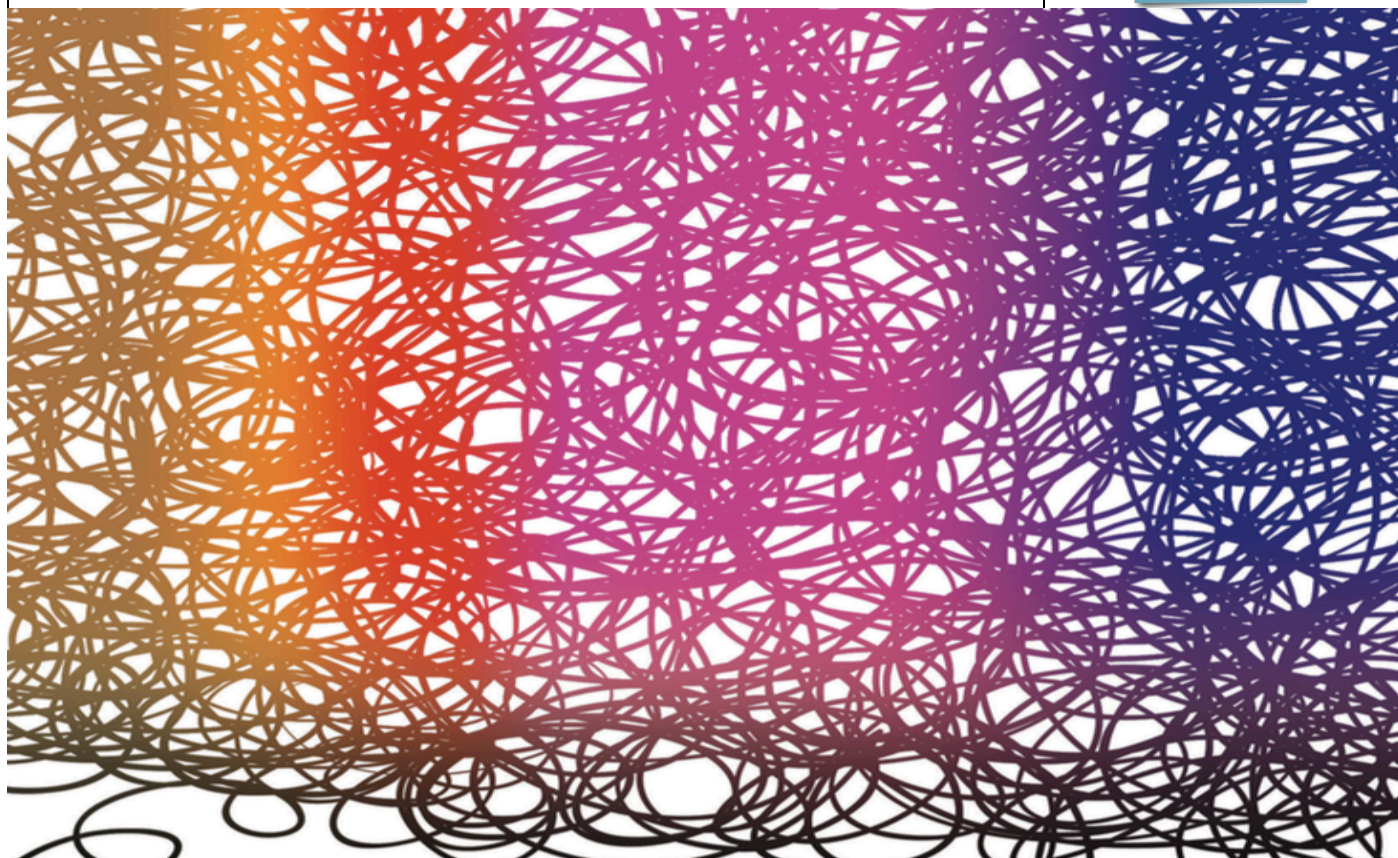
What can I do?



Information for disabled or Deaf women



in Easy Words and Pictures



Hello!



This information is for disabled or Deaf women, or women with an impairment or long-term health condition.



Has someone hurt you? Has someone done things that you did not want?



Has someone attacked you or threatened you?



Has someone touched you when or where you did not want them to?



Has someone scared you or called you names?



You may have been a victim of violence or abuse.



It is never your fault. You are not alone!



You can get help.



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<h2>About the project</h2>	
<p>What? The project was called “Access to Specialised Victim Support Services for Women with Disabilities who have Experienced Violence”.</p>	<p>Access to Specialised Victim Support Services for Women with Disabilities who have experienced Violence</p> 
<p>When?</p> <p>The project was from 2013 until 2015.</p>	
<p>Where? This project happened in 4 places in the European Union:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austria (the red country on this map) • Germany (the yellow country on this map), • Iceland (the green country on this map) • United Kingdom (the blue countries on this map are England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). 	 
<p>The money came from a European fund called Daphne 3. This is money that is used to protect women, children and young people from violence.</p>	

What did we do?

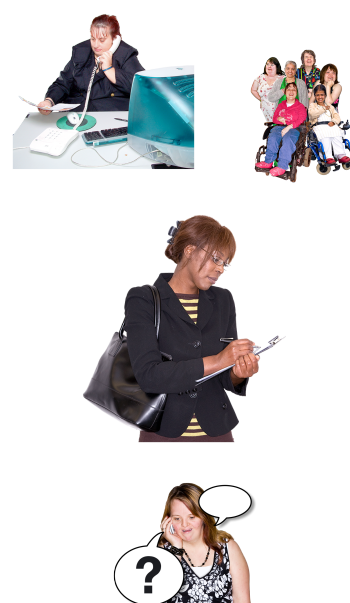
Universities, disabled or Deaf women, service providers (including shelters or refuges, counselling services and victim services), victims and survivors all worked together. We did three things:



1. We looked at the law and policies in the different countries in the project. These are books and papers that say what must happen or what should happen in different places.



2. We asked disabled or Deaf women about the violence that happened to them. They talked in groups and interviews. We asked staff who work with victims (in refuges, support and counselling) questions about what there is for disabled women. We asked them questions online or at interviews.



3. We found out what works and shared it with people. We have said what should be better about services for disabled women after violence or abuse.



What did we find out?



People are violent to disabled women two or three times more often than they are to other women. It is a big problem.



There are barriers to access in support, information and services after violence.

We have said what we think should be done to improve services.



You are not alone. Together we can do something about it!



The reports are free. They are in Easy Read, British Sign Language and audio at this website:

women-disabilities-violence.humanrights.at/publications



What we found from the four countries in the study



Many disabled women in the four countries experienced serious and severe violence – you are not alone!



Many disabled women were attacked in institutions, by carers, or at home by partners or men in their families.



Some men want to hold power over disabled women like us. They do not want us to tell people what happened. Sometimes, we are scared about losing the support we need.



Disabled women told us they were abused when they were children.



Sometimes you only understand what happened many years after.



Support is there when you need it, even if it is many years after.



Many disabled women have been deliberately threatened or isolated by the person who was violent.

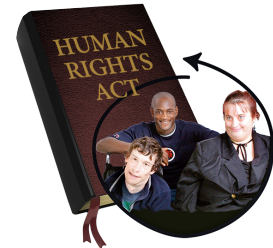
Many violent men take away our mobility or communication aids to stop us seeing or talking to other people.



A man might give you too much medicine or too many tablets, to stop us from telling people about what happened or escaping



All of these things are against your human rights.



They are against the Law and they are wrong.



You can get help and support.



Types of Violence Against Disabled Women



Violence happens to disabled women all through our lives – as babies, girls, teenagers and adults.



You might find this part of the booklet upsetting. But what happened is never your fault. We can make things better and safer by speaking up.



Violence is wrong. It can be:



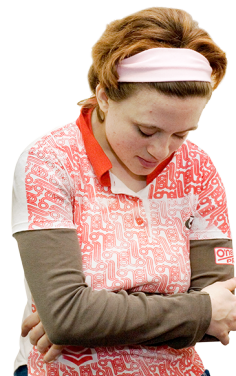
- **Mental violence (hurting how you feel about yourself, making you feel worthless or making you scared).**



- **Physical violence (hurting your body, by kicking, bruising, spitting on you, choking, slapping or punching you).**



- **Emotional violence (threatening you or someone you love, or keeping you away from people).**



- **Sexual violence (touching your genitals in private places between your legs or your breasts, making you watch videos where people are doing things that you don't want to see, making you have sex when you have said no, or making you do things you don't want to a man).**



One woman in the project said, “A male staff member would barge into your room and, you know, take off the duvet. They just feel that, I don't know, that it's part of their work.”



- **Domestic violence (when your partner, husband or the person you live with hurts you).**



- **Abuse in institutions (where someone who is paid to care for you in a home or centre is violent, cruel or neglects you).**



One woman in the project said: “They took my chair. Now I’m very independent, but when people take my chair away I’m a sitting duck. After about three hours of feeling degraded and abandoned and humiliated, I phoned up a friend and said, “Can you come and help me get dressed and get me out of here.”



- **Impairment-specific violence (this is violence against disabled women. The abuser could take your chair away, or not take you to the toilet when you need to. They might make you take strong drugs, or sterilise you so you cannot have children).**



One woman in the project said: “He would purposefully give me the strongest painkillers when my friends were coming, and they couldn't come then obviously because I was asleep. He would cancel care shifts, he would then say that I'd cancelled them, because again when you've had them tablets you're not good at remembering anything - even what your name is.”



- **Forced marriage (this is where you do not want to be married, or you are made to get married because a person abused you and you were so scared that you had to get married).**



- **Some disabled women or girls have forced marriages because they do not understand their rights or what is happening to them.**



One woman in the project said: “All my three brothers... They arranged or forced my marriage... I was twenty at the time and he was [much older]. And for the sake of me starting to talk to my [family] I got married but I stayed in India for eight months. They ... wouldn't let me come back... I tried to commit suicide a couple of times and they [husband's family] ..got fed up and sent me back to England.”



Some men use threats or steal money to control the women they abuse.



It is harder for disabled women to leave violence, when they need the person for their support. This makes the risk of violence bigger and makes it last longer than for other women.



Violence hurts everybody. It doesn't matter where you are from, you're your religion is, how much money you have, whether you are a lesbian or live with a man – violence can be done to us. Women of different ages and disabilities can all experience violence.



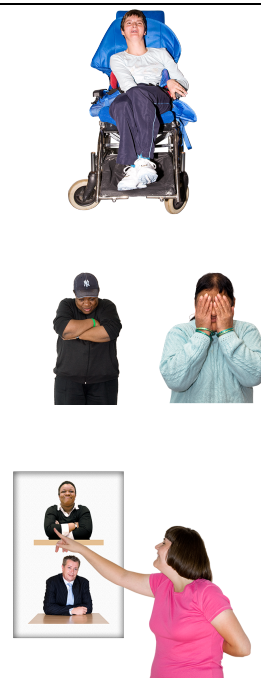
You might not have thought it was violence or abuse at the time, if it is part of your normal life.



Disabled women can have worse abuse and violence against them. We can be targeted if men know we cannot defend ourselves.

They can isolate us and take away our chances in life.

But we can get help and start to choose our own support.



If violence or abuse has happened to you, it is not your fault. You can get help. The places that can help you are at the back of this booklet.



What should we do about it?



Disabled women want safe spaces.

We need support from a person we trust.



When we are believed about what happened and taken seriously, things can get better.



But lots of services for women do not know how to have good access to buildings or information.

They told us they do not have the money, so more funding is needed.



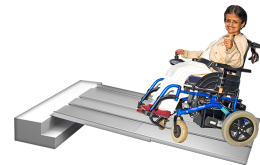
Disabled victims or survivors are important! We can speak out to stop violence.

We can help to make places safer for other women.

We do not want barriers that disable us or stop us being seen as women.

All the disabled women in this project want to live in an inclusive society.

We want safety to live the lives we want.



Police, politicians and people who run women's services must make sure we can take our rights.

When we work together..

We can guarantee safety and a life with no violence..

For disabled women in the future!



What do disabled victims and survivors want?



Disabled and Deaf victims and Survivors in the project wanted:



- **Good assessment of women's needs and access requirements, thinking about the violence that happened to us.**



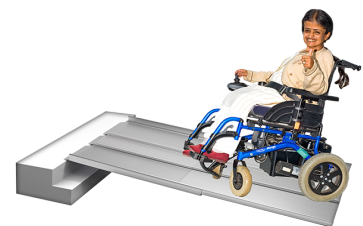
- **Independent living that understands the violence we experienced.**



- **Look at me as a whole woman.**

See the whole picture.

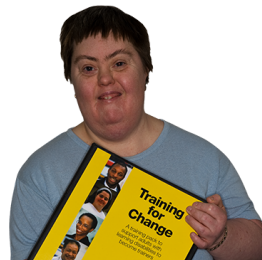
Help that has no barriers.



Groups that know about violence against disabled women helping us.



What we want groups that help women after violence to do about it!



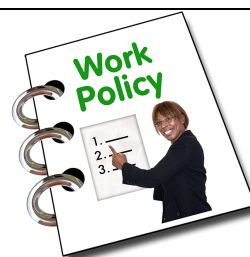
- **We want places that know about violence against disabled women.**
- **We want to be believed.**
- **We want accessible information.**



- **Come and talk with us!**



- **Employ disabled or Deaf staff and volunteers.**
- **Police, courts, victim services and refuges need more disabled people working for you. This could make you more accessible and welcoming.**
- **If you give Deaf women a job, you will not need interpreters. This will be cheaper, help you be safe and keep our details private.**



• Information and support is better from a person than the internet. Not everybody can use a computer. Come and see us!



Refuges need more spaces to stay that are accessible for disabled women.



Good things that some women's groups already do!



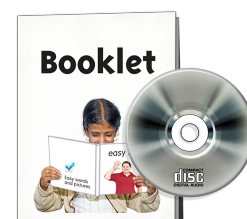
• One Violence Against Women (VAW) group works with a disabled people's organisation and a university.



• A group built an accessible refuge for disabled women after violence.



• A violence against women group and a disabled people's organisation made easy read information.



- **Services that work for black or Asian disabled women, older disabled women and other groups are good. They understand our cultures and religions.**



- **Some services work with women with learning difficulties who were targeted by men.**



Where to get help and support..



In England and Wales



National Domestic Violence Helpline:

Tel: 0808 2000 247

It's free. There is someone there for you every day and every night. It has Typetalk. It does not show up on your bill. Email them if it is not urgent: helpline@womensaid.org.uk



Deaf Hope – Deaf Women's Refuge and support after domestic violence

SMS: 07970 350366

Voice/Minicom: 020 8772 3241

Email: deafhope@signhealth.org.uk



My Sisters Place (Teesside) – a refuge.

Phone: 01642 241864

Website: <http://mysistersplace.org.uk>



Oasis House - a refuge for women with learning difficulties (and if you are pregnant or have children) in London.

Tel: 0208 478 3177

Email: contact@oneonecoco.co.uk



<p>Scotland</p>	
<p>Rape Crisis Scotland Tel: 0141 331 4180 Website: http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk</p>	
<p>Wise Women – Personal Safety Training in Glasgow Tel: 0141 550 7557 Website: http://www.wisewomen.org.uk/</p>	
<p>Saheliya – BAME women’s mental health support in Scotland Tel: 0131 556 9302 Website: http://www.saheliya.co.uk/</p>	
<p>Shakti Women’s Aid, Edinburgh. Refuge and support for BME women in Scotland. Tel: 0131 475 2399 Email: info@shaktiedinburgh.co.uk</p>	 
<p>Deaf Connections and Ishara Tel: 0141 420 1759 Website: http://www.deafconnections.co.uk/</p>	

Northern Ireland



**24 hr National Domestic Violence Helpline
0808 802 1414**

Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland



Disability Action, Belfast

Tel: 028 9029 7880

<http://www.disabilityaction.org/>



Disabled People's Organisations



UK Disabled Peoples Council members

Website: <http://www.ukdpc.net/ukdpc/pages/members.php#mem.uk/>



Shaping Our Lives

Tel: 0845 241 0383

Website: <http://www.shapingourlives.org>









Disability Wales, Caerphilly. CF83 3GW

Tel: 029 20887325 Fax: 029 20888702

Email: [info@disabilitywales .org](mailto:info@disabilitywales.org)



<p>National Forum of People with Learning Disabilities</p> <p>Website: http://www.nationalforum.co.uk/</p>	<p>national forum of people with learning disabilities</p> 
<p>People First Members Groups</p> <p>Tel: 0207 274 5484</p> <p>Website: http://peoplefirstltd.com/members/</p>	
<p>To report a disablist hate crime</p>	
<p>Stop Hate UK: 0800 138 1625</p> <p>You do not have to give your name.</p> <p>True Vision:</p> <p>Website: http://www.report-it.org.uk/home</p>	
<p>Disabled people's groups working after hate crime, institutional abuse or violence against women</p>	
<p>Stay Safe East (London)</p> <p>Tel: 0208 519 7241 Text: 07587 134 122</p> <p>Email: advocacy@staysafe-east.org.uk</p> <p>Website: www.staysafe-east.org.uk</p>	
<p>Vision Sense (North East and Cumbria)</p> <p>Tel: 0300 111 0191</p> <p>Email: justice@visionsense.co.uk</p>	 <p>Vision Sense Training • Research • Audit • Advocacy</p>

**The research was done by this project:
“Access to specialised victim support
services for women with disabilities who
have experienced violence”
with funding from the Daphne 3 Programme
of the European Union.
University of Leeds, University of Glasgow
and Vision Sense wrote this booklet. It
cannot be seen to reflect the views of the
European Commission.**



The partners in this project were:

